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The University of Dayton

News Release

March 22, 1993

Contact: Rosemary Harty

UD STUDY: MONTGOMERY COUNTY JVS CAREER PLANNING BRINGS FUTURE INTO FOCUS FOR EIGHTH-GRADERS

DAYTON, Ohio -- Ask a typical eighth-grader what's on his or her mind and you're likely to hear about sports heros, Madonna or the newest video game. Few have realistic ideas about how they plan to earn a living in the future.

But a University of Dayton study shows that a new career education program developed by the Montgomery County Joint Vocational School gave students a sharper picture of how to plan for the future.

Carolyn Benz, assistant professor of educational administration at the University of Dayton, says students exposed to the Individual Career Planning program (ICP) developed more sophisticated views of their careers, along with specific strategies for training and education.

This new program was developed as a result of Ohio's major education reform package, Senate Bill 140. The career planning program must be fully implemented throughout Ohio by 1994. And until now, no one has measured the program's effectiveness.

Benz, working with Ron Kindell, career development coordinator of Montgomery County JVS, tested 2,900 students before and after the career planning program and found the frequency of "immature" responses declined significantly after the course. Immature responses included answers that showed no knowledge of what training or education was needed for fields or how to assemble a schedule for high school.

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Key concepts in the education program include career exploration, academic planning, self-awareness, self-assessment and future trends. The program also emphasizes equal opportunities for women and minorities.

"Eighth grade may seem too early to be thinking about a career," Benz says. "But students make some important decisions in high school and they need to be made with some information and perspective."

Montgomery County JVS, which developed and coordinates the program Benz evaluated, is a year ahead of most school districts in the state, said Jim Gilbert, Montgomery County JVS supervisor for career education and communication and a UD counselor education instructor.

"An eighth-grader isn't expected to have a finalized career plan. What they have is a fuzzy picture of the future. What we're really teaching them is how to plan a career, how to be aware of the consequences of their decisions," Gilbert said. "We don't want to squash dreams."

"There's nothing wrong with starting a career plan in the eighth grade. What would be tragic would be leaving high school with the same fuzzy, unrealistic picture," he said.

Benz and Gilbert shared the results of the study March 9 during a special meeting with state legislators. Students who participated in the career planning study attend schools in the 27 districts the Montgomery County JVS serves, Gilbert said.

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For interviews or more information, contact Carolyn Benz at (513) 229-3308 or Jim Gilbert at (513) 837-7781, ext. 337.